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ABSTRACT

This book examines some of the main problems arising in the sociology of education, and seeks to shed light on the methods that are frequently employed to study them. An attempt is made to distinguish the formal level of education from the real level of education. On the basis of the formal level of education researchers can divide populations into categories according to the highest level attained in the education system. The real level of education, on the other hand, is the level of knowledge that individuals actually possess but that has no formal expression. The formal level and real level often bear little or no relation to one another. The problem of inequality of opportunity is explored in terms of access to education. Research methods used to explain inequality of opportunity consist of techniques for distinguishing the effects of the factors that account for the differences. For example, these techniques are used to estimate what proportion of the inequality of real levels of education can be attributed to an individual's social background and what proportion attributed to one's formal level of education. An analysis utilizing these same techniques is undertaken in an attempt to explain the distribution of occupations. A substantial bibliography is included. (DB)

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